



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

March 9, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF HEARING EXAMINER PILOT

Due to the budget curtailment, we are proposing to temporarily suspend implementation of the Hearing Examiner pilot process. The Hearing Examiner Section was established in the FY 2007-2008 departmental budget with \$300,000 in funding, and funding was continued in the current fiscal year. Subsequent to the creation of the Hearing Examiner Section, the Department developed an ordinance which provided a structure for the Hearing Examiner process; this ordinance was adopted by your Board on August 12, 2008.

The effort required to initiate the Hearing Examiner process, and the need to assign high-level planners to staff the section, has slowed our implementation of the Hearing Examiner pilot. As a result, none of the positions in the section have ever been filled. The budget curtailment has forced us to look at ways to reduce costs while minimizing impacts to existing programs whenever possible. Since the Hearing Examiner process has not yet been implemented, we believe that postponing the pilot until such time as we have improved funding and staffing capabilities is the appropriate course of action. In the interim, should a project come to light in which the Hearing Examiner process would make sense, we could appoint a Hearing Examiner for that specific project without impacting other Departmental programs.

I am happy to answer any questions regarding the postponement of the Hearing Examiner pilot as well as other aspects of our decision-making process relating to the budget curtailments.

JS:TE:DS:jc

c: William T Fujioka
Lari Sheehan